

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Book	Policy Manual
Section	700 Property
Title	Therapy Dogs
Code	718.1
Status	Active
Adopted	June 22, 2020

Purpose

The Board supports the visitation of therapy dogs for general classroom activities by teachers or other qualified school personnel ("Owner" or "Handler") for the direct benefit of its students, subject to the conditions of this policy.

Authority

The Board may permit individuals to use therapy dogs on district property (including buildings) upon request, submission of required documentation, and approval by the designated administrator in accordance with this policy.

Definition

Therapy dog - a **therapy dog** is a dog that has been individually trained and certified to work with its Owner to provide emotional support, comfort, therapeutic benefits, emotional well-being or companionship to school district students. **Therapy dogs** are not service animals as that term is used in the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and, therefore, approval of the use of a therapy dog on district property is entirely within the discretion of the administration and not considered a required reasonable accommodation under the ADA. The dog must be well behaved and have a temperament that is suitable for interaction with students and others in a public school as determined in the sole discretion of the administration. Therapy dogs are personal property of the Owner and are not owned by the school district.

Guidelines

The following requirements must be satisfied before a therapy dog will be considered for approval for use on school property:

1. **Request.** An Owner who wants to bring a therapy dog to school must submit a written request to the building principal or Superintendent. The request should include the dates that the therapy dog will be at the school and the specific reason that the therapy dog will be present. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different therapy dog will be used.
2. **Training and Certification.** The Owner must submit the Keystone Pet Enhanced Therapy Service Certification or its equivalent as determined by the Superintendent. The certification must remain current at all times the dog is present on district property.
3. **Health and Vaccination.** The therapy dog must be clean, well groomed, in good health, house broken, and immunized against diseases common to dogs, and required by state law. The Owner must submit proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof

of the therapy dog's current vaccinations and immunizations from a licensed veterinarian.

4. **Health and Safety.** The therapy dog must not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee or other person at school. This determination shall remain in the sole discretion of the administration both at the approval stage and at any time the therapy dog is present on district property. Permission must be granted by parent/guardian prior to visitation of therapy dog.
5. **Identification.** The therapy dog must have appropriate identification identifying it as a therapy dog.
6. **Authorized Area(s).** The Owner shall only allow the therapy dog to be in areas in school buildings or on school property that are previously authorized in writing by the school district administration.
7. **Insurance.** The Owner must submit a copy of a current insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the therapy dog and Owner and any Handler while on school property.

The Owner or Handler of the therapy dog shall be solely responsible for:

1. **Control.** A therapy dog must be under the control of its Owner or Handler through the use of a leash, harness or other tether unless the use of a leash, harness or other tether would interfere with the therapy dog's safe, effective performance of its approved tasks (and then must be in the Owner or Handler's control via signals, voice or other effective means). However, the therapy dog must be under the Owner's control at all times.
2. **Supervision and Care of Therapy Dogs.** The Owner is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the therapy dog, including feeding, exercising and clean up while the dog is in a school building or on school property. The district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision or assistance for a therapy dog.
3. **Allergic Reactions.** Determination of student allergy impact should be made before the therapy dog enters the school or classroom. If any student or school employee assigned to a classroom in which a therapy dog is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the therapy dog, the Owner of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by an administrator.
4. **Damage to School Property and Injuries.** The Owner of a therapy dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students or others caused by the therapy dog, Owner or Handler.
5. **No Disruption.** The therapy dog shall not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention or any other behavior deemed disruptive by the administration.
6. **Exclusion or Removal from School.** A therapy dog approved for use on district property may be excluded from school property at the sole discretion of the administration.